

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims replaces the listing of claims submitted in Applicants' Preliminary Amendment dated March 16, 2006, which were thereafter amended in Applicants' Second Preliminary Amendment dated May 17, 2006.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Heating element ~~(4)~~ for a cooking appliance, especially for direct or indirect electrical heating of at least one cooking product, comprising:
 - at least one supporting layer ~~(2)~~,
 - at least one heating element layer ~~(8)~~ which lies directly or indirectly against the supporting layer ~~(2)~~ at least in sections, ~~and~~
 - at least one electrical contact or conducting element, and ~~(24)~~, characterized by
 - at least one elastic arresting element ~~(12)~~, which is connected or can be connected to the electrical contact or conducting element ~~(24)~~, whereby the electrical contact or conducting element ~~(24)~~ can be brought into contact, using the elastic force of the elastic arresting element ~~(12)~~, ~~at least intermittently~~, with at least one heating resistor ~~(806, 806', 807, 807')~~ and/or with at least one contact location ~~(830, 830')~~ of the heating element layer ~~(8)~~.
2. (Currently Amended) Heating element ~~(4)~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized by the fact that this~~ wherein the heating element ~~(4)~~ ~~is represented especially by~~ comprises an essentially flat heating plate or by a device in which heating ~~that~~ is completely or in regions essentially tubular, ~~especially cylindrical~~.

3. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to Claim 1 ~~or 2, characterized by the fact that~~ wherein at least one separating layer is disposed between the supporting layer (2) and the heating element layer (8) at least in sections ~~at least one separating layer, is present preferably comprising at least one graphite layer (6) to~~ make the heat input into the supporting layer (2) at least partially uniform, and/or at least one mechanical buffer layer and/or at least a first thermal insulating layer is disposed on the side of the heating element layer (8), which is away from the supporting layer (2) and/or between the heating element layer (8) and the elastic arresting element (12), at least in sections, ~~at least one mechanical buffer layer is present, preferably comprising a mica layer (10) and/or at least a first thermal insulating layer, preferably comprising a mica layer.~~
4. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by~~ Claim 3, further including at least one pressing means, ~~preferably comprising a pressing plate (4), with which the elastic arresting element, preferably comprising an elastic element plate (12), the mechanical buffer layer (10), the first thermal insulating layer, the heating element layer (8) and/or the separating layer (6), can be pressed or is/are pressed against the supporting layer (2) for making the pressing strength onto the supporting layer (2) and/or of the heat input into the supporting layer (2) uniform at least in regions.~~
5. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 4, wherein the mechanical buffer layer (10), the first thermal insulating layer and/or the pressing means (4) has/have at least one outlet ~~(22, 30)~~ for the contact or conducting element (24) in the region of at least one second section (28) of the elastic arresting element (12).

6. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 5, wherein the elastic arresting element (12) has at least one first section (26) which is between, on the one hand, the heating element layer (8), the first thermal insulating layer and/or the mechanical buffer layer (10) and, on the other hand, the pressing means (4), and a second free section (28), which is connected to the first section (26), the free section being able to be connected directly or indirectly, ~~especially through a third section,~~ to the contact or conducting element (24), ~~whereby the section (28) lies preferably in the second region of the outlet (22, 30).~~
7. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to Claim 6, ~~characterized by at least further including~~ one fourth section (34) which is attached to the second and/or third section (28) of the elastic arresting element (12) and/or the contact or conducting element (24), whereby the fourth section (34) is preferably connected or can be connected to the mechanical buffer layer (10), the first thermal insulating layer and/or the pressing means (4).
8. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 7, wherein the contact or conducting element (24) can be connected through an insulator, ~~preferably in the form of an insulating sleeve (20), to the elastic arresting element (12), especially to the second, third and fourth section (28, 34) thereof.~~
9. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 3, wherein the supporting layer (2) is made completely or partially of stainless steel and/or the mechanical buffer layer (10) is made completely or partially of mica.
10. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that this has,~~ Claim 1, wherein looking from the supporting layer (2) in the direction of the elastic arresting element (12), ~~as the supporting layer (2) or as the heating element layer (8) is defined,~~ at least in sections, by at least one stainless steel layer and/or, at least in sections, by at least one ceramic layer as well as furthermore at least in sections at least one layer with electrical heating resistors (~~806, 806', 807, 807'~~) and/or at least in sections at least one glass layer is disposed.

11. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1, ~~to 9~~, characterized by the fact that wherein the supporting layer (2), viewed from the a free outside surface, has at least one layer containing at least one heat conducting metal, ~~especially steel~~, at least one layer containing at least one metal with good thermal conductivity, ~~especially copper~~, and at least one second insulating layer.
12. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1, ~~to 9~~, characterized by the fact that wherein the supporting layer (2), viewed from the a free outside surface, has at least one layer containing at least one metal with good thermal conductivity, ~~especially copper~~, at least one layer containing at least one metal with poor thermal conductivity, ~~especially steel~~, and at least one second insulating layer.
13. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1, ~~to 9~~, characterized by the fact that wherein the supporting layer (2), viewed from the a free outside surface, has at least one electrically insulating ceramic layer, at least one electrically conducting ceramic layer and/or at least one second insulating layer.
14. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of the previous claims~~, characterized by the fact that Claim 1, wherein the heating element layer (8) is designed as a thick film or as a thin film.
15. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 14, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the heating element layer (8) can be produced by serigraphy or by a printing process, ~~preferably as a thick film~~.

16. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 1, wherein the heating element layer (8) has a plurality of individual heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807'), which are arranged in at least two heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805') in such a way that the heating resistors within each heating track (804, 804', 805, 805') are connected electrically parallel to one another and that the heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805') are connected in series to one another, and all heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') can be supplied simultaneously with electrical energy, whereby at least two different heating resistors have different heating powers and/or the heating resistors are arranged on the heating element layer (8) at different distances to one another, at least in regions, and the heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') are produced as a thick film.
17. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 16, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') can be produced on the heating element layer (8) with a serigraphic or a printing process.
18. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 16, ~~to 17,~~ ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein at least two heating resistors with different heating powers have different electrical resistances, ~~especially different geometric dimensions and/or comprise different materials, especially materials with different dopings.~~
19. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 18, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein at least two of the heating resistors ~~with~~ have different surface areas ~~have with~~ different peripheral shapes, ~~especially at least one heating resistor has an essentially polygonal, especially trapezoidal, triangular, square, rectangular and/or hexagonal peripheral shape,~~ different peripheral lengths, different side lengths, ~~especially different widths and/or lengths and/or different thicknesses.~~

20. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 16, ~~to 19~~, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the heating power and/or the distance of the heating resistors is adjusted at least in regions ~~preferably over the complete heating element to~~ based on a pressing strength of the heating element layer (8) onto the supporting layer (2) present at least in regions, or to a predetermined heating power density distribution within the heating element (8) which is present at least in regions, ~~especially as a function of a local thermal conductivity of the supporting layer (2),~~ and/or to a predetermined heat density distribution within the supporting layer (2) ~~predetermined~~ at least in regions.
21. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 20, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the heating power of a first heating resistor which is arranged in a first region of the heating element layer (8) with a first pressing strength of the heating element layer (8) onto the supporting layer (2), is smaller than the heating power of at least one second heating resistor, which is arranged in a second region with a second pressing strength of the heating element layer (8) onto the supporting layer (2), which is smaller in comparison to the first pressing strength and/or the distance of two heating resistors to one another is larger in the first region than the distance between two heating resistors to one another in the second region.
22. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 21, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the first region is located near at least one, ~~preferably bordering at least one~~ attachment or pressing location, ~~preferably in the form of an opening (822, 824, 826, 828)~~ for at least partial leadthrough or partial penetration of an attachment device for applying the heating element layer (8) to the supporting layer (2), and/or the second region is located further removed in comparison to the first region from at least one attachment or pressing location, ~~especially not bordering on at least one of these.~~

23. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of Claims 16 to 22,~~ characterized by the fact Claim 21, wherein the heating power of a third heating resistor which is located in a third region of the heating element layer with a first heating power density of the heating element layer, is smaller than the heating power of at least one fourth heating resistor which is located in a fourth region with a second heating power density of the heating element layer which is smaller in comparison to the first heating power density, and/or the distance of two third heating resistors in the third region is larger than the distance of two fourth heating resistors in the fourth region.
24. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 23, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the third region of the heating element layer is located near at least one, ~~preferably bordering at least one~~ first region of the supporting layer with a first thermal conductivity and/or with a first heat density and that the fourth region of the heating element layer is located near at least one, ~~preferably bordering at least one~~ second region of the supporting layer with a second thermal conductivity which is smaller in comparison to the first thermal conductivity and/or with a heat density larger in comparison to the first heat density.
25. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of Claims 16, to 24,~~ characterized by the fact that wherein the electrical heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') of a heating track (804, 804', 805, 805') have essentially the same heating power, essentially the same geometric dimensions, are essentially at the same distance from one another and/or are made essentially of the same materials.
26. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of the previous claims,~~ characterized by the fact that Claim 4, wherein the separating layer (6), the heating element layer (8), the mechanical buffer layer (10), the first thermal insulating layer, the elastic arresting element (12) and/or the pressing means (4) are designed as one element.

27. (Currently Amended) Heating element according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 4, wherein the pressing means (4), the elastic arresting element (12), the mechanical buffer layer (10), the first thermal insulating layer, the heating element layer (8) and/or the separating layer (6) can be joined to one another separably or in a fixed manner, ~~especially by means of adhesion, preferably by means of an adhesive.~~
28. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to ~~one of the previous claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 16, wherein the heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805') each have a large number of heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807'), at least pair-wise neighboring one another, whereby the heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') have a surface which is limited at least partially, ~~preferably in a plane,~~ by first and second side edges (810, 820), whereby two neighboring heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') have facing neighboring first side edges (810.1, 810.2, 810.1', 810.2') in order to produce electrical parallel circuits and ~~these~~ the two neighboring heating resistors are at least partially at a distance from one another and/or are electrically insulated ~~especially through at least one insulating intermediate layer or electrical insulation (812).~~
29. (Currently Amended) Heating element (4) according to Claim 28, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein two facing neighboring second side edges (820.1, 820.2) of the heating resistors (806, 806', 807, 807') of neighboring first and second heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805'), in order to achieve electrical series connection of the heating tracks, have at least partially at least one first electrically conducting means; ~~especially in the form of at least one first electrical conducting path (808) lying against the, especially each,~~ second side edge (820.1) of the heating resistors (806, 807) of the first heating track (804), and against the, ~~especially against each,~~ second side edge (820.2) of the heating resistors (806', 807') of the second heating track (804'), and can be connected to one another or are connected to one another, whereby, using a first electrically conducting means (808), an electric current can be conducted through electrical heating resistors (806, 807, 806', 807') of neighboring first and second heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805').

30. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims,~~ characterized by Claim 16, wherein at least one second electrically conducting means (814, 816) that connects at least two, ~~especially all,~~ second side edges (820) of heating resistors (806, 807) of an outer heating track (804, 805) to one another in a connecting manner, ~~which are especially not neighboring a first or second side edge of a heating resistor,~~ whereby the at least one second electrically conducting means (814, 816) has ~~especially~~ at least one contact position (830, 830') and/or is in working relationship with a contact position (830, 830').
31. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of the previous claims,~~ characterized by Claim 30, wherein at least one third electrically conducting means is connected to at least one, ~~especially each,~~ first and/or second side edge of a heating resistor of at least one first outer heating track, ~~which is especially not neighboring a first or second side edge of a heating resistor of a first or second heating track, and especially has no insulating intermediate layer.~~
32. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 29 to 31, characterized by the fact that wherein the first, second and/or third electrically conducting means (808, 814, 816) comprises at least one electrical material with high conductivity, ~~especially silver or copper.~~
33. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 16, to 32, characterized by the fact that wherein the at least one set of neighboring heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805') are arranged essentially parallel to one another and/or at least one heating track (804, 804', 805, 805') is arranged along a straight, curved or circular path.
34. (Currently Amended) Heating element (1) according to ~~one of~~ Claims 16, to 33, characterized by the fact that wherein at least two of the heating tracks (804, 804', 805, 805') have different dimensions.

35. (Currently Amended) Heating element ~~(1, 1')~~ according to ~~one of~~ Claims 16, ~~to 34~~, ~~characterized by the fact that wherein~~ each heating track ~~(804, 804', 805, 805')~~ has at least three, ~~especially at least five~~, electrical heating resistors ~~(806, 806', 807, 807')~~ and/or the heating element includes at least three, ~~especially at least five~~, heating tracks ~~(804, 804', 805, 805')~~ which can be connected to one another ~~preferably~~ through at least one electrically conducting means ~~(808)~~ and can be connected electrically to a power source through at least two contact positions ~~(830, 830')~~.
36. (Currently Amended) Cooking appliance comprising:
at least one heating element ~~(1) according to one of the previous claims~~ having;
at least one supporting layer,
at least one heating element layer which lies directly or indirectly against the supporting layer at least in sections,
at least one electrical contact or conducting element, and
at least one elastic arresting element which is connected or can be connected to the electrical contact or conducting element, whereby the electrical contact or conducting element can be brought into contact using the elastic force of the elastic arresting element with at least one heating resistor and/or with at least one contact location of the heating element layer.
37. (Currently Amended) Cooking appliance according to Claim 36, ~~characterized by the fact that wherein the~~ at least one heating element ~~(1), preferably all heating elements,~~ can be secured separably on the cooking appliance, ~~especially through a screw connection.~~
38. (Currently Amended) Cooking appliance according to Claim 36 ~~or 37~~, ~~characterized by further including~~ a control and/or regulating unit which is ~~especially~~ in working connection with at least one, ~~especially all~~, heating element(s) ~~(1)~~ and/or with at least one, ~~especially all~~, electrical heating resistor(s) ~~(806, 806', 807, 807')~~, and/or with at least one sensor.

39. (Currently Amended) Cooking appliance according to Claim 38, ~~characterized by the fact that through~~ wherein the control and/or regulating unit, is capable of operating so that the heating power of the heating element, ~~preferably of the individual heating resistors and/or at least of two groups of heating resistors~~ can be controlled and/or regulated ~~especially as a function of at least one characteristic quantity that can be detected especially through a sensor, such as temperature, moisture, degree of browning of a cooking product, weight of a cooking product, size of a cooking product, type of a cooking product and/or similar.~~
40. (Currently Amended) Method for the production of a heating element layer (8) of a heating element (1) ~~according to one of Claims 1 to 35,~~ having a supporting layer, at least one electrical contact or conducting element, and at least one elastic arresting element, which is connected or can be connected to the electrical contact or conducting element, whereby the electrical contact or conducting element can be brought into contact using the elastic force of the elastic arresting element with at least one heating resistor and/or with at least one contact location of the heating element layer, and in which the heating element layer lies directly or indirectly against a supporting layer at least in sections, comprising: the steps of
preparing a substrate; and
applying the heating resistors and/or one or more electrical conducting paths to the substrate with a serigraphic technique.
41. (Currently Amended) Method according to Claim 40, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein a covering layer is subsequently applied to the heating resistors and/or one or more electrical conducting paths at least in regions.
42. (Currently Amended) Method according to Claim 40, ~~or 41, characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the substrate is provided with at least one electrically conducting material, ~~preferably a metal, especially stainless steel,~~ glass, ceramic and/or plastic and/or, before applying the heating resistors, applying at least in regions at least one thermally- and/or electrically insulating layer ~~is applied~~ onto the substrate.
43. (Currently Amended) Method according to ~~one of Claims 40 to 42,~~ characterized by the fact that wherein the thermally- and/or electrically insulating layer is provided with at least one ceramic material and/or at least one glass material.

44. (Currently Amended) Method according to ~~one of Claims 40 to 43, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 41, wherein the covering layer is provided with an electrically insulating material and/or a material which protects against mechanical influences; ~~preferably with glass and/or a protecting varnish.~~
45. (Currently Amended) Method according to ~~one of Claims 40, to 44, characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the heating power, the electrical resistance and/or the distance of the heating resistors to one another is adjusted by dimensioning the geometric measurements of the heating resistors.